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BIGGLESWADE URBAN
DISTRICT

ANNUAL REPORT

For the Year

1947



OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
AND
SANITARY INSPECTOR

ANNUAL REPORT OF 1947

To the Members of the Biggleswade Urban District Council.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit the annual report on the public health and sanitary conditions in your district for the year 1947.

The rates for births, still births and deaths call for no comment as these are very similar to the rates for England and Wales. The rate for deaths of infants under one year is, however, somewhat higher, being 56 as compared with 41 for the whole country. There were 8 infant deaths during the year and, from the table of causes of death, it will be seen that 3 deaths were due to prematurity and 2 to congenital malformation and birth injuries. The County Council as the welfare authority investigates all cases of premature birth, so that advice and assistance can be given to ensure that future pregnancies may, if possible, be normal.

During the year an outbreak of poliomyelitis, commonly called infantile paralysis, affected most of the country. One case occurred in Biggleswade in a person of 27 years of age.

There were eight cases of paratyphoid fever notified and the outbreak is discussed in the report.

In spite of the great effort the Council is making the housing problem still remains one of urgency and, until many more houses are provided, little headway can be made in easing the burdens of those who are living in overcrowded and unsatisfactory dwellings.

I wish to thank all the officials of the Council and their staffs for their help and co-operation so freely given at all times.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

C. A. HARVEY,

Medical Officer of Health.

GENERAL STATISTICS

Area (in acres)	4,647
Registrar-General's estimate of Population	7,066
Number of inhabited houses end of 1947	2,092
Rateable Value	£37,783
Sum represented by a penny rate	£ 147

VITAL STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR

Live Births

	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
Legitimate	70	63	133
Illegitimate	5	4	9
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	75	67	142
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Birth rate per 1,000 civilian population			20.9
Birth Rate for England and Wales			20.5

Still Births

	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
Legitimate	2	1	3
Illegitimate	—	—	—
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	2	1	3
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Still Birth Rate per 1,000 civilian population			0.42
Still Birth Rate for England and Wales			0.5

Deaths

	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
All Causes	34	47	81
Death Rate per 1,000 civilian population			11.4
Death Rate for England and Wales			12.0
Deaths from diseases and accidents of pregnancy and child birth:			
From Sepis	—	—	—
From other causes	—	—	—
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	—	—	—

Deaths of Infants under One Year of Age

	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
Legitimate	3	5	8
Illegitimate	—	—	—
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	3	5	8
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Rate for all infants per 1,000 live births			56
Rate for England and Wales			41

VITAL STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR—continued.

Deaths From:—

Measles (all ages)	...	...	...	—
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	—
Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)	...	...	...	1
Influenza	...	...	...	—
Cancer (all ages)	...	...	...	12

STATISTICAL TABLE 1942-1947

Year	DEATH RATE		BIRTH RATE		INFANTILE MORTALITY RATE	
	Biggleswade Urban	England & Wales	Biggleswade Urban	England & Wales	Biggleswade Urban	England & Wales
1942	12.2	11.6	14.5	15.8	56.0	49
1943	12.6	12.1	17.1	16.5	32.8	49
1944	11.2	11.6	21.6	17.6	46.6	46
1945	11.5	11.4	15.9	16.1	70.7	46
1946	10.7	11.5	15.8	19.1	27.2	43
1947	11.4	12.0	20.9	20.5	56.0	41

CAUSES OF DEATH

The following table shows causes of death as given in the Registrar-General's statistics:

<i>Causes of Death</i>								<i>M.</i>	<i>F.</i>
All Causes	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	34	47
1. Typhoid and Paratyphoid Fevers	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
2. Cerebro-spinal Fever	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
3. Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
4. Whooping Cough	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
5. Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
6. Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	—
7. Other forms of Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	2
8. Syphilitic Diseases	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
9. Influenza	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
10. Measles	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
11. Acute Poliomyelitis and Polioencephalitis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
12. Acute Infective Encephalitis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
13. Cancer of Buccal Cavity and Oesophagus (M) Uterus (F)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
14. Cancer of Stomach and Duodenum	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	2
15. Cancer of Breast	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	3
16. Cancer of all other Sites	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	2
17. Diabetes	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	—
18. Intra-cranial Vascular Lesions	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	8
19. Heart Disease	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7	9
20. Other Disease of Circulatory System	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
21. Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2
22. Pneumonia	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	2
23. Other Respiratory Diseases	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	1
24. Ulcer of Stomach or Duodenum	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
25. Diarrhoea under 2 Years	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	1
26. Appendicitis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
27. Other Digestive Diseases	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
28. Nephritis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	—
29. Puerperal and Post-Abortion Sepsis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
30. Other Maternal Causes	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
31. Premature Birth	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2
32. Congenital Malformation, Birth Injuries, Infantile Diseases	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	2
33. Suicide	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	—
34. Road Traffic Accidents	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
35. Other Violent Causes	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
36. All Other Causes	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	8

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES

Public Health Officers

Medical Officer of Health —

C. A. HARVEY, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor—

W. S. GREEN, M. & Cy.E., A.R.S.I.

Laboratory Facilities

The arrangements whereby Medical Practitioners could obtain bacteriological examination of swabs, blood, faeces and cerebro-spinal fluid, at the Bedford County Hospital laboratory were continued.

During the year also, full advantage was taken of the facilities offered by the Medical Research Council through the Emergency Public Health Laboratory Service at Cambridge during the period when there were cases of paratyphoid fever in the area and the surrounding district.

Ambulance Facilities

(a) Infectious Diseases.

Stationed at the Isolation Hospital, Biggleswade, an ambulance was available for the removal of cases to hospital, and an ambulance at Mogerhanger Sanatorium was used for persons suffering from Tuberculosis.

(b) Non-Infectious Diseases and Accidents.

The County Council are the responsible authority, with a depot at Crab Lane, Biggleswade, telephone 2295, where three ambulances and two cars were available for the transport of patients to and from hospital, providing a 24 hourly service.

Nursing

(a) One Midwife is available for maternity cases and one nurse, who also attends the Minor Ailments Clinic, for minor medical and surgical cases.

(b) The Isolation Hospital at Biggleswade, which undertook the treatment of cases of infectious disease, had to close down during the year owing to acute shortage of nursing staff. Arrangements were made for cases to be admitted to other hospitals within and without the County.

Clinics and Treatment Centres under the County Council

Child Welfare—Masonic Rooms, Biggleswade, Tuesday afternoon.

Ante and Post Natal—Masonic Rooms, Biggleswade—every alternate Tuesday morning.

Venereal Disease—Bedford County Hospital. The days and times of attendance are:—

Males—Monday to Friday, 4 - 8 p.m.

Females—Monday and Tuesday, 6 p.m.

Wednesday, 5 - 7 p.m.

Thursday, 5 p.m.

Friday, 3 - 5 p.m.

Tuberculosis

A Clinic was held at St. Andrew's Rooms, Biggleswade, each Wednesday until November 1947. On November 27th a Chest Clinic was opened at St. Peter's Hospital, Kimbolton Road, Bedford, where a complete specialist service, including X-Ray examination, is now available. The days and times of attendance are:—

Monday: 10.0 a.m. to 12.0 noon—Contacts (both sexes).

Monday: 2.0 p.m. to 3.30 p.m.—Pneumothorax refills.

Tuesday: 9.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.—Women and children

Thursday: 9.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.—Men.

Friday: 10.0 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.—Pneumothorax refills.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

Water Supply

Water is supplied to the area by the Biggleswade Water Board and has proved very satisfactory in quality and quantity. Samples have been taken periodically during the year and the results have shown that the supply is of the highest standard of organic and bacterial purity.

The following report by the Counties Public Health Laboratories of a sample sent for examination on 19th February 1947 is typical.

Chemical Examination in parts per Million

Colour	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil
Odour	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil
Reaction pH.	Neutral	...	...	...	...	...	...	7.3
Free Carbon Dioxide	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	17
Electric Conductivity at 20 degs. C.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	525
Total Solids dried at 180 degs. C.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	350
Chlorine in Chlorides	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	19
Alkalinity as Calcium Carbonate	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	235
Hardness.	Total	...	...	...	...	...	...	285
	Temporary	...	...	...	...	...	...	235
	Permanent	...	...	...	...	...	...	50
Nitrogen in Nitrates	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	0.00
Nitrogen in Nitrites	...	...	...	...	...	Less than	...	0.01

Free Ammonia	...	...	...	...	...	0.014
Albuminoid Ammonia	...	...	...	...	...	0.000
Metals	...	...	...	...	Iron	0.03
Free Chlorine Reaction	...	...	...	...	...	—
Oxygen absorbed in 4 hrs. at 27 degs. C.	...	...	...	...	...	0.10

Bacteriological Examination

Number of Colonies developing on Agar per cc. or ml. in						
1 day at 37 degs. C.	...	...	...	...	...	0
2 days at 37 degs. C.	...	...	...	...	...	0
3 days at 20 degs. C.	...	...	...	...	...	3
Presumptive Coliform Reaction	...	...	...	...	Absent from 100 ml.	
Bact. coli.	...	...	...	...	Absent from 100 ml.	
Cl. welchii Reaction	...	...	...	...	Absent from 100 ml.	

The water was considered pure and wholesome in character and suitable for public supply purposes.

The lengths of new water main laid during the year is given in the report of the Sanitary Inspector, as also is the quantity of water used, which is approximately 30 gallons per day per head of population.

Drainage and Sewerage

With the exception of a few cottages on the Langford Road and some outlying cottages the whole of the area has a water carriage system. The sewage disposal plant has been working to capacity. The length of new sewers laid during the year is given in the Sanitary Inspector's report. The cesspools of the outlying un-sewered properties are emptied by arrangement.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES, OTHER THAN TUBERCULOSIS

(a) General Statistics

The following table shows the number of cases of infectious diseases notified during the year, together with the number of cases admitted to hospital and the deaths from these diseases.

Diseases (other than Tuberculosis) notified during the year 1947

<i>Disease</i>	<i>Total cases notified</i>	<i>Cases admitted to Hospital</i>	<i>Total deaths registered</i>
Smallpox	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever	5	3	—
Diphtheria	—	—	—
Typhoid	—	—	—
Paratyphoid	8	8	—
Puerperal Pyrexia	—	—	—
Pneumonia	—	—	—
Cerebro-spinal Fever	—	—	—
Acute Infective Encephalitis	—	—	—
Polioomyelitis	1	1	—
Polioencephalitis	—	—	—
Erysipelas	1	—	—
Dysentery	—	—	—
Malaria	—	—	—
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	—	—	—
Measles	7	—	—
Whooping Cough	13	—	—
Jaundice	—	—	—
Total	35	12	—

(b) Individual Diseases

Paratyphoid Fever—Eight persons were notified as suffering from paratyphoid fever, the first case being notified on the 21st August and the last on the 28th September. The outbreak was concurrent with a similar outbreak of the disease in the surrounding districts. In the table of analysis of the cases of infectious diseases the age and sex distribution is set out and it will be observed that, of the 8 cases notified, 5 were females and 3 males. In only one instance did more than a single case occur in a household.

The disease was mild in character, the chief symptoms being malaise, headache with diarrhoea and some abdominal pain, and the patients after the first two or three days felt reasonably well. There were no deaths from the disease.

A very full investigation was undertaken to establish the cause of the outbreak. There was no contact between any of the cases in the district, or between them and cases which had occurred in the surrounding area and there was no common article of food. The source of the infection was not found. It is probable that, owing to the comparatively mild nature of the disease, there were cases in the community whose symptoms were so slight, that they did not seek medical advice and who may have been, unknown to themselves, sources of infection.

The help given by the Public Health Laboratory Service at Cambridge in the examination of specimens of blood, stools and urine and of water samples is gratefully acknowledged. The total number of specimens examined and reported on was 94.

Poliomyelitis—One case of poliomyelitis was notified. The disease was mild and the patient made a complete recovery.

Scarlet Fever—Five cases were notified of which three were admitted to hospital. There were no deaths.

Diphtheria—No cases were notified.

Measles—The number of cases notified was 7, as compared with 83 in the previous year.

Whooping Cough—Thirteen cases were notified.

Erysipelas—One case was notified.

Analysis of Cases of Infectious Diseases notified during the year ended 31st December, 1947

<i>Disease</i>	<i>Under 1 year</i>	<i>1 to 3</i>	<i>3 to 5</i>	<i>5 to 10</i>	<i>10 to 15</i>	<i>15 to 25</i>	<i>25 to 35</i>	<i>35 to 45</i>	<i>45 to 65</i>	<i>65 and upwards</i>	<i>Total all ages</i>
Smallpox	M. F.	M. F.	M. F.	M. F.	M. F.	M. F.	M. F.	M. F.	M. F.	M. F.	—
Scarlet Fever	—	—	—	2	3	—	—	—	—	—	5
Diphtheria	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Typhoid	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Paratyphoid	1	—	1	—	2	1	1	1	1	—	8
Puerperal Pyrexia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pneumonia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cerebro-spinal Fever	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Acute Infective Encephalitis	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Polionyelitis	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
Polioencephalitis	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Erysipelas	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Dysentery	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Malaria	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Iphthalmia Neonatorum	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Measles	1	1	1	2	1	1	—	—	—	—	7
Whooping Cough	2	1	3	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	13
Jaundice	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Scabies Order 1941

The provision for treatment of cases of scabies at the Borough Treatment Centre, Bedford, was continued, 6 cases receiving treatment.

On the 31st December, 1947 the Scabies Order, 1941 made under the Defence (General) Regulations ceased to be operative. The Council however still have statutory powers under the Public Health Acts for dealing with verminous persons and conditions.

School Closure

It was not necessary to close any of the schools in the area on account of Infectious disease.

Eradication of Bed Bugs

Five houses were found to require disinfestation and were treated by means of Lawes Disinfestators and were sprayed with Zaldecide. In addition, 10 tenants removing to new Council houses had their furniture fumigated by means of cyanide in specially constructed vans. This was carried out by a firm specialising in this type of work. The results were satisfactory.

Immunisation in Relation to Child Population

Numbers of Children who had completed a full course of Immunisation at any time up to 31st December, 1947

Age at 31.12.47 i.e. Born in year	Under 1 1947	1 1946	2 1945	3 1944	4 1943	5 to 9 1938-1942	10 to 14 1933-1937	Total under 15
Number Immunised	—	50	132	137	115	401	376	1211
Estimated mid-year population, 1947		591				977		

II—Diphtheria Notifications and Deaths in relation to Immunisation

<i>Age at date of notification</i>	<i>Number of cases notified</i>	<i>No of cases included in preceding column in which child had completed full course of Immunisation</i>	<i>Age at date of death</i>	<i>Number of deaths</i>	<i>No of cases included in preceding column in which child had completed full course of Immunisation</i>
Under 1	—	—	Under 1	—	—
1	—	—	1	—	—
2	—	—	2	—	—
3	—	—	3	—	—
4	—	—	4	—	—
5 to 9	—	—	5 to 9	—	—
10 to 14	—	—	10 to 14	—	—
Totals	—	—	Totals	—	—

TUBERCULOSIS

The following table shows the number of new cases, and the number of deaths in their age groups.

Age Distribution of Cases and Deaths

<i>Age Periods</i>	<i>New Cases</i>				<i>Deaths</i>			
	<i>Respiratory</i>		<i>Non-Respiratory</i>		<i>Respiratory</i>		<i>Non-Respiratory</i>	
	<i>M.</i>	<i>F.</i>	<i>M.</i>	<i>F.</i>	<i>M.</i>	<i>F.</i>	<i>M.</i>	<i>F.</i>
0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
10	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
15	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
20	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
25	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
35	1	1	—	—	1	—	—	1
45	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
55	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
65 and upwards	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	1	3	—	—	1	—	—	2

Public Health (Prevention of Tuberculosis) Regulations, 1925

No action was taken under these regulations.

REPORT OF SURVEYOR AND SANITARY INSPECTOR

Year Ended 31st December, 1947

Building Plans

The following plans were approved by the Council and were regularly inspected during course of construction:—

Garages	...	...	...	7
Alterations and Additions	...	...	...	19
Dwellings	...	...	...	6
Canteens	...	...	...	2
Advertisement Signs	...	...	...	1
Shops	...	...	...	2
Greenhouses, agricultural buildings and temporary Store Sheds etc.				14
				51

General Sanitary etc. Inspections

The following inspections were made and defects remedied when necessary by informal action:—

Housing defects	...	...	...	906
Unfit houses	...	...	...	9
Defective drains	...	...	...	77
Factories	...	...	...	14
Water wastages	...	...	...	591
				1597

Meat, and Other Foods

The following foodstuffs were condemned as unfit for human consumption:—

Meat	...	...	...	210 lbs.
Offal	...	...	...	22½ lbs.
Bacon	...	...	...	40½ lbs.
Fish	...	...	...	154 lbs.
Canned Meat	...	...	...	239 lbs.
Jam	...	...	...	12 lbs.

MEAT, OTHER FOODS—*continued.*

Mustard	...	...	...	22 lbs.
Cereals, dried beans etc.	...	...	...	567 lbs.
Dried fruits	...	...	...	2366 lbs.
Confectionery, Biscuits etc.	...	...	...	478 lbs.
Orange Juice	...	...	...	23 bottles
Butter	...	...	...	1 lb.
Dried Egg	...	...	...	12½ lbs.
Varied Tinned Foods	...	...	...	3582 tins

All meat is now slaughtered and allocated from a Ministry of Food Slaughterhouse in the neighbouring Rural District where it is properly inspected.

Any English or imported meat or offals which has been found unfit for consumption is entirely due in my opinion to unsatisfactory handling. The delivery vans are dirty and the carcasses piled one on top of the other. Despite repeated comments on the condemnation certificates provided as to unsatisfactory handling no apparent notice is taken and no improvement in method of delivery has been observed.

House Scavenging

This is carried out by means of a 10 cubic yard Karrier Refuse Collector and in addition to collections of house refuse, the men also collect salvage in a trailer attached. Despite efforts to arouse interest and the work of the collectors (who are paid a bonus on collections) the general public are apathetic towards the necessity for salvage, the total collections for the year being as follows:—

				<i>Tons cwt. lbs.</i>		
Paper	...	...	...	25	7	0
Rags	...	...	...	1	8	0
Bones	...	...	...		2	0
Scrap Iron	...	...	...	14	1	2
Bottles and Jars	...	...	...	2	12	0

Sewerage

During the year 1261 yards of 6 inch and 9 inch sewer extensions were carried out, serving the Council's Housing Estates.

Water Supply

1060 yards of 3 inch and 4 inch Water Mains were constructed also for the purpose of serving the Council's Housing Estate at Gas House Field.

The total consumption of water for the year was 77,766,000 gallons, giving an average of approximately 30 gallons per day per head of the population. This is a gradually increasing figure and is no doubt accounted for by the number of new temporary

and permanent houses built since the War and equipped with baths and all modern conveniences.

As stated before in the report, 591 inspections for water wastages were made. 40 Notices were sent out requiring repairs to prevent waste and 551 taps were re-washed free of charge.

Milk Supply

There are 5 cowsheds and 11 milk sellers registered in the district. Inspections have been carried out, and there is a good standard of cleanliness of premises and also in the handling and distribution.

Housing

During the year 1261 yards of 6 inch and 9 inch sewer extension permanent Aluminium and 50 temporary Aluminium bungalows were completed and occupied on the Council's Estates.

W. S. GREEN, M. & Cy.E., A.R.S.I.,
Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector.

FACTORIES ACT, 1937

PART I

1.—Inspections

<i>Premises</i>	<i>Number on Register</i>	<i>Number of Inspections</i>	<i>Number of Written notices</i>	<i>Number of Occupiers prosecuted</i>
(1) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities ...	19	16	7	—
(2) Factories not included in (1) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	47	12	2	—
(3) Other Premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out-workers' premises	—	—	—	—
Total ...	66	28	9	—

2.—Cases in which defects were found.

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Number of cases in which defects were found</i>				<i>Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted</i>
	<i>Found</i>	<i>Remedied</i>	<i>To H.M. Inspector</i>	<i>By H.M. Inspector</i>	
Want of cleanliness ...	2	2	—	—	—
Overcrowding	—	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable temperature	1	1	—	—	—
Inadequate ventilation ...	—	—	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors	—	—	—	—	—
Sanitary Conveniences					
(a) insufficient	—	—	—	—	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective	4	4	—	—	—
(c) Not separate for sexes	—	—	—	—	—
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Outwork)	2	2	—	—	—
Total!	9	9	—	—	—

PART VIII

Outwork

Nature of Work	Section 110			Section 111		
	No. of outworkers in August list required by Section 110 (1) (c)	No. of cases of default in sending lists to the Council	No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists	No. of instances of work in unwholesome premises	Notices served	Prosecutions
Wearing apparel } Making	2	—	—	—	—	—

Larkinson Bros. Ltd., Printers, Church Street, Biggleswade
